

any other teeth than the two which give the peculiar character to the animal. Prof. Owen considers that the whole of the anterior part of the jaws was sheathed with horn in the same manner as the Chelonians, and this is the more interesting from the other analogies presented with the Chelonians. It appears indeed throughout, that this singular animal united the character of the Lacertians, Chelonians and Crocodilians. The second species described was named *D. testudiniformis*, and differed from the former in its greater resemblance to the Chelonians. A third species, *D. strigiceps*, is chiefly remarkable for the singular position of the tusks, placed far back behind the orbit of the eye. The nearest analogue of this singular genus is the *Rhynchosaurus* of the new red sandstone of England. An unexpected point of structure exhibited in these animals is the existence of tusks like those of mammalia, exhibiting no mark whatever of the presence of a succession of teeth, which in all other reptiles known invariably exist. The tusks of the *Dicynodon* were probably used as weapons of offence and defence, and the habits of the animal seem to have been marine.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

Jan. 3, 1845.—J. E. Gray, Esq., F.R.S. &c., President, in the Chair.

Mr. S. Gibson presented a specimen of *Scirpus acicularis* (Linn.) with much longer stems than ordinary; the culms formed a dense tuft about 14 inches high.

Mr. Fitt presented specimens of an *Ænanthe* commonly considered *Æ. pimpinelloides* by the botanists of Norfolk. It is the *Æ. Lachenalii* (Gmel.) of Babington's 'Manual,' and the species confused with or mistaken for the true *pimpinelloides* by most other English botanists since the time of Hudson.

Four of the specimens were selected for the Society's herbarium, as showing variations from the normal character of the root. Some of the tubers were branched; some approximated to those of Smith's "*peucedanifolia*" in being thicker and shorter than ordinary. On one specimen the external fruits in the umbellules are very slightly contracted at their base; the ridges being confluent and forming a ring, much like the callous base of the fruit in the true *pimpinelloides*. The specimens were located from salt-ditches near Yarmouth.

The Secretary called the attention of members to a series of specimens of *Dryas octopetala* (Linn.), which had been sent to the Society some years ago by Mr. Tatham from Arncliffe Clonder, Yorkshire. The sepals or lobes of the calyx varied considerably in length and breadth; on one specimen the length was scarcely twice the breadth, while in another the length was four times the breadth. The convexity of the base of the calyx also varied much. He reminded the meeting that Mr. Babington had described a second species of *Dryas* (*D. depressa*, Bab.) found in Ireland, and distinguished from the well-known *D. octopetala* by exactly the same characters which these specimens proved to be within the range of variation of the true *D. octopetala*. He had not seen any example of the *D. de-*

pressa, described in Babington's 'Manual,' and could not speak with certainty about its claims to be held a distinct species; but the published characters by which it was attempted to be distinguished from the better known species were scarcely sufficient with these examples before the Society. When a series of specimens of *D. octopetala* are examined, it will be seen that the sepals are usually broader in those which are more advanced in the fruiting stage, as compared with others just opening into flower. Of the specimens before the Society, the one having the broadest sepals was advanced in fruit. But it was proper also to observe, that on this specimen a single sepal was longer than the rest, and had apparently been white and petal-like at its extremity; it might therefore be considered an aberration rather than a healthy variation from the normal form.

MISCELLANEOUS.

NOTES IN NATURAL HISTORY*.

"I HAVE been able to make scarcely any remark worthy of notice on subjects connected with natural history since I left England. One is of the growth of the "Chicorée †," as the shells I send you are called, at Séchelles: they are found in the grassy weed which grows on a somewhat muddy bottom, in which they bury themselves almost entirely during the period in which the shell is tender. I send you four, with the shells in progressive stages of development, which I collected and packed with great care, and hope you will receive them safe.

"In coming from Séchelles hither we touched at Juan de Nova, where I had an opportunity of seeing for the first time an island of purely coral formation. It is of a horse-shoe shape, about twenty-one miles long, and from half to three-quarters of a mile broad, with extensive reefs around it abounding with turtle. Dogs of different kinds have been left there from time to time, and finding abundance of food in the turtle-eggs, young turtle, and sea-fowl, have multiplied prodigiously, so that there are now some thousands of them. I can testify from personal observation that they drink salt water, and they have *entirely lost the faculty of barking*. Some of them which have been in captivity several months had not yet lost their wild looks and habits, nor had they any inclination for the company of other dogs, nor did they acquire their voice. You may perhaps have heard of this before; if so, my notice will confirm your knowledge; if not, I hope the facts, as being of my own ocular demonstration, will prove interesting. On the island the dogs congregate in vast packs, and catch sea-birds with as much address as foxes could display. They dig up the turtle-eggs and frequently quarrel over their booty. The greater part of them droop their tails like

* Extract from a letter dated Port Louis, Mauritius, Oct. 2nd, 1844, from G. Clarke, Esq. to Thomas Bell, Esq.

† *Murex saxatilis*.